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DAVID's Distress and Deliverance

A

# SERMON

ON

I SAMUEL 30. 6. Preached at

# EDINBURGH.

March 22nd. 1696.

By J: W: Minister of the Gospel.

*Psal: 42. 11. Why art thou cast down O my Soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in GOD: For I shall yet praise Him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my GOD.*

Ecce par DEO Dignum, vir Bonus cum Mala Fortuna compositus, Seneca:



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EDINBURGH,

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# To the S: C:

R: B:

THE Actings of the Spirit of GOD are Harmonious on every Believing Soul, varying only according to the different Circumstances of the Respective Persons, ours being Congenial at the time; I hope what affoorded me Solace, may have the same Effect on any of you who endeavour to seek GOD in earnest, that it may prove Successful for that Effect, next to the Honour of our Exalted LORD and Master, is the earnest Prayer of His unworthy Servant, And

Kirkwall, Febr: 5.  
1696.

*Your fellow Sufferer in the Kingdom  
and Patience of JESUS*

CHRIST,

J: W:



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# SERMON

O F

## DAVID's Distress and De- liverance.

**I** Sam: 30. 6. *And David was greatly Distressed, for the People spake of Stonning him, because the Soul of all the People was grieved, every Man for his Sons and for his Daughters; But David encouraged himself in the LORD his GOD.*

**T**HE preceeding History shews the ground of these Words: That being plain, I proceed to the Words themselves. In which, remark the State of a Religious Soul under Distress, that in the midst of a Storm without, hath Calm Weather within. Observe 1st. A Storm from all Corners, bearing on the Divine Soul. 2dly. The Sedate calm and serene Temper thereof; I shall consider them as they ly.

*First. Inward Distress, Arr: Mont: Et Angustia fuit David valde, Jun: & Trem: Angustia esset Davidi valde.* The troubles that lighted on the Bodies of others fell on his Spirit; Outward Providences are no Straits, till they get into the Heart, a total stoppage of the Passages about the Heart, causes Death, a Coarctation from the Sense of imminent or present Evils thereof, Grief.

2dly, Peoples Tongues, boyling causes Froath, when the Heart is in bitterness, the Tongue will give vent, according to the Mans Disposition, in Words, of Discontent or sinful Passion.

3dly, When the Waves rise higher, bad Words often end in worse Actions ; if not prevented by Providence or Grace : The stroke that was from GOD, is charged on *David* : They see the Stone, and not the Hand therefore, would throw it back at him, as the suspected person.

4thly, The Ground of all, and that 1st. Inward, their Soul was grieved, *Arr: Mont: Quod amaritudine affecta esset omnis anima, Jun: & Trem: Erat enim amarus animus populi*, These troubles like sowne Leaven, had fermented their Hearts.

2dly, Outward, for their Sons and Daughters, these are Mens greatest Treasures, their Goods were also taken away ; But this afflicts more, that the Hope of surviving in their Post-  
erity was gone.

2dly, Under all this, consider the Calmness of *David's* Spirit, *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia*, sayes one, *Sapientis animus est instar status mundi supra lunam: semper illic serenum est*, sayes *Seneca*, wherein notice 1st. His Frame, *Arr: Mont: robustavit*, he strengthened himself : *Jun: & Trem: confirmavit*, he confirmed himself, and that on a two fold Ground.

First, The Power, All-Sufficiency and Sovereignty of GOD, *Isa: 26. 4. In the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting Strength. His Name is a strong Tower, Prov: 18. 10.*

2dly, His Interest in Him, JEHOVAH denotes his Essence, *Elisbaddai* his Power and All-Sufficiency, but *Domino Deo suo*, denotes *David's* Proprietie. There is much Divinity in Pronownes, sayes *Luther*, The Name LORD hath Thunder, but my GOD Sweetnes. *GOD, even thy GOD, shall bless thee, Psal: 67. 6.*

From the Words thus explained, many Doctrines might be deduced ; But my designe is to insist on the Latter Part, which contains this Proposition. Under

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Under straits, Outward or Inward, on the Soul, Body or Condition, the Sovereignty, Power and All-Sufficiency of GOD, and an Interest in Him, gives encouragement and Comfort. In the prosecution of this, consider first, what there is in GOD to Encourage, and this will discover that there is nothing in other things, that is not in him.

The Encouragements from God are reduceable to these four Heads. *First*, His Attributes, there is a Stock of Comfort, a Well-spring of Everlasting Delight, a Fountain that cannot be drawn dry; His power is for His people, and against their Enemies. The same Cloud is dark on the *Egyptians* side, light on the *Israelites*: His Wisdom guides their Hearts and wayes; And when humane policy, mean arts, and contrivances prove like a foot out of Joynt, this gives light and direction. His goodness, that seems wrapt up in the Cloud, tho it shine not on their outward conditions; Yet with its Rayes Illustrates their Hearts: As the Sun, when the Clouds enterpose betwixt its light and us, shines still above. His Truth is more than the dim light of nature, or the Moon-shine of legal Ceremonies, or the faint conceits of men; (like an *ignis fatuus* or *stella americana*) it shines on all, according to their cappacities, and its Entertainment. His Holines like niter or sope, tho it toss, yet it refines the Soul: Yea his Justice, which of all the rest looks most terrible, brings them to act by lower motives of fear, which better experience sublimats to hope, till it end in the most manlie and rational inducement of Obedience, Love. Thus these his attributes, those seeming to dim wit, to d s<sup>t</sup>igree; Yet concur Harmoniously to the Souls encouragement, first in duty, and then in comfort: For the seeking encouragement in the latter without the former, is but putting a surface over the Wound, while it festers within.

*Secondly*,

Secondly, His providences look favourably on the gracious heart, that passage, *Isa. 26. 21. Come My people, enter into thy Chambers, &c.* Whether it be to be understood of the attributes, or providences, or promises of GOD, is true of all three, and by interpreters, is thought to be taken from the common practice of men, who then there are dangers or storms abroad, betake to their Houses, or to that, *Exod. 9. 19, 20. Of not going out of their houses, Exod. 12. 22.* Or to relate to that of *Rahab. Josh: Chap: 2.* Even these dispensations, the soul is ready to entertain such thoughts of, as *Jacob, Gen: 42. 36. All these things are against me;* Yet, as with him, all was concurring for the good of his familie, and the Church; So these Passages, whereof we judge *ante quintum actum* in the end are found the best, yea needful. If *Abraham* can bear riches, he shall have them. If to *Lazarus* Soul poverty be meetest, he must have it. A dung-hill exercises *Jobs* patience as the Bench had done his integrity and Charitie: In the one he wanted feet to guide him, except these of faith and patience, in the other he was feet to the lame, Let us never entertain bad thoughts of providence, till we see the whole frame. That passage is more comprehensive than ordinary Christians are aware of, *Rom: 8. 28. All things work together for good, to them which love GOD.* There are some have uttered an expression, which must be cautiously said and explained, that their sins did them most good, and their graces least, not in their own nature, but corruption or grace mingling, sin became matter of Humiliation, their graces of elation of mind.

Thirdly, The promises of God, are a Wellspring of comfort, if infidelity did not dam up, or divert its conduits. There is more to be seen be a Gratioues Heart in one promise, than a thousand volumns, where the Soul is convinced of Divine veracity, and perswaded of the certainty of Divine revelation; And I am perswaded, that supposing a God and Providence

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vidence, which none in their wits dare deny; Yea in their secret thoughts must say, *quid si?* Supposing this, I say, the certainty and fullness of them, suitable to all conditions, events and circumstances, is encouraging: So that there is not any condition the Soul can labour under, but it finds something in the word that meets it. It were a transcribing Holy write, to give particular instances. I am perswaded none in the least degree acquaint with Christianity can deny it, only herein lyes our error, that as we are ready to mistrust the promises when they are due, so also to trust to them when they do not belong.

4ly, Experiences from GOD's actings on the Soul in every Condition, are a great ground of Encouragement; This extends not only to the Outward Course of Providence, but especially to the Inward Actings on the Heart, for the Infinitely Wise GOD discovers Himself unto us three wayes.

*First*, In the Works of Nature, this vast Frame, all its Wheels are guided by an Architect, that is Wise, Great, and Good, and he that guides well the Universal Frame, will much more his peculiar Servants.

2ly, Of Providence, there indeed, things, if we eye their outward Surface, seem not to roule in so regular a Course, being byassed by Mens corruptions; Yet still without any confusion: Things may indeed seem to us to act confusedly, but GOD is Orderly in all His Workings, and the wayes Men takes to build, He takes to demolish; For the same very Methods the Foolish World attempt to ruine the Gracious Soul by, are the Wayes the Wise GOD is using for their Establishment. *Joseph's* selling into *Ægypt*, was designed for his ruine, and defeating his Prophetic dreams, while providence was making use of the same to raise both the patient and Agents. *Thirdly*, The experiences of his goodness, appear signally

nally in acts of grace, his secret dealings on the Souls of men. I shall instance only some of them suitable to the Text.

*Experience 1.* When he shuts one Fountain he opens another. *David* could have no room in *Judah*, gets it among his very enemies in *Zicklag*; And when he wants outward Ordinances, wants not also Divine Consolations: if his condition be straitened outwardly, its enlarged inwardly. If *Hagars* Bottle be spent, there is supply at hand. If *Canaan* yield no Corn, *Ægypt* must. If he take away the Staff of Bread, and support without it, we want nothing. We are tyed to the means, so is not he. If he shut Ministers Mouths, he can open their hearts. If he withdraw maintainance from Authority, before his Prophet want meat, a *Raven* it self unclean to be eaten, shall fetch clean food.

*Experience 2.* GOD is not alwayes against these whom men are: *Vidrix causa, diis placuit; Sed vidita Catoni:* said the Poet: Tho even among good men, their corruptions may be striving against one another, GOD is oft on the Sufferers side. *Saul* indeed, *1 Sam: 28. 15.* may have the *Philistins* present and GOD absent; But here there is distress from men, and encouragement from and in GOD. The band of men may be near JESUS to Crucify; but the Angel is as near to Comfort him.

*Experience 3.* Outward straits end not there, but at length straiten the heart: For troubles are not worthie of that name, till they reach the heart. *Job. 34. 29.* *If he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, and è contra.* As is the heart, such is the man, either Cloudy or comfortable. Crosses or comforts either begin or end there. If GOD's presence be not with us, we move like *Pharaohs* Chariots in the red Sea; but if the Oyl of Joy anoint the Wheels, like the Chariots of *Aminadab, a willing People.* *Neh: 8. 10.*

*Experience*

Experience 4th, The Fear and Love of GOD, casts out the fear of Men : *David* eying the *Ziklagites* saw nothing but stonning ; Eying GOD, Encouragement, *Isa. 8. 13, 14.* The fear of Men espyes nothing but a Conspiracy, the Fear of GOD, a Sanctuarie, Perfect Love casteth out fear of Suffering be Men. *1 John 4. 18.* When there appears darkness overspreading the Hemisphere, in a Storm or Ecclipse, the Sun that is darkned is not set. JESUS can tell, *John 19. 11. Ye had not had power over me if it had not been given you from Above.*

Experience 5th. Tho GOD permits to annoy ; yet gives no power to destroy them: The *Ziklagites* that threaten stones might as easily have thrown them, that which reached to *Jobs Children*, substance and skin, might have reached his life, but none in Heaven, earth or hell dare exceed their commission, *Nero* burns the Christians, but he could not consume Christianity. *Dioclesian* erects his Triumphs, *Post deletum nomen Christianum* ; But they were then alive that saw it wear the Imperial Diadem and purple. All the advantage Men obtain by fighting against the Interest of CHRIST and Christians, is, that they get their Grave in the Quarrel, which they digg with their own Hands. Let Winds bluster, Tides rise, Enemies roar, Shelves threaten, and Self straiten, the Ship of the Church, and of particular Believers also, *Fluitat, & nunquam mergitur.* -----

Experience 6th, Before Deliverance, Straits urge most, the day before the Dawning is darkest : Betwixt *Malachie*, the last of the Prophets (who according to Bishop *Usher's Annals*, lived *Anno M: 3589*) and our Saviour's appearing, *Anno M: 3984*, were 395 years, not a Prophet sent in all this time, till the LORD of all the Prophets appears. Remark *David* here immediatly before his wearing the Crown straitned, the next Chapter shews the death of *Saul*, and thereafter his Solemn Investiture. The *Israelites* at *Baalzephon*, see how straitned,

*Exod: 14. 10. Et Seq:* observe how it ends *Chapter: 15.* throughout. Eye the *Psalms*, where many of them begins with Sadness, end with Comfort ; Yea, the Text begins with Distress, and ends with Encouragement. Thus it is also with private Christians, as Experience will convince, when the Clouds are thickest, the Sky darkest, the Soul overcasten, neither Sun nor Stars appearing for many dayes , a Harbour appears for the distressed Soul.

*For Improvement.*

**H**ence we may learn, first what it is, that obstructs our Comfort; It is true, sometime indeed, and very often in melancholie persons , and unexperienced Souls, either the dark and duskie fumes of melancholie thoughts, or mistakes about the Nature of GOD, unwarrantable conceits about Decrees, or excess in passionate expressions of sorrow, or mistaking the Nature of Faith and Repentance, or doubts about their perseverance, or expecting perfection, where GOD expects only Sincerity with the Merits of JESUS to make the Soul compleat ; These often discourage, but it is as certain, that there are Spiritual Derelictions for a time, when the Influences from Heaven are denied, and then Tilling and Sowing are still Duties; tho fruitless. Else what means that *Psal: 30. 6. 7.* Certainly *David* appears no Melancholian , for he is descrived rather by a Sanguine Complexion, a Ruddie Man. That also evinces this, *Isa: 49. 14. 15.* In the 14th. verse forgotten, in the other remembred , *As that which is dearest.* It is true, that passage may be understood also, of temporal Dealings ; But not only, for the Scriptures are so full, that they include at once, a literal and mystical Sense. As is evident in Citations in the *New* from the *Old Testament*, and in the Life of JESUS, which is the perfect Patern for the Christian, as to Doctrine and Life, see *Joh: 12. 27. Now is my Soul troubled,*

troubled, and what shall I say? If thus Clouds overcast a Soul that never offended, what may us, who offend dayly? In the Apostles ye see Instances of the same, by comparing *Roma* 7. 24. with *Chap.* 8. 1. in the one verle, *Not only Death, but the very Body of it*, In the other, *No Condemnation*: Whether it be to be understood of the Regenerat or unregenerat, in some Sense, it was true of himself, whether in a primarie or secondarie Sense, it matters not; Yea, there is none that seek GOD sincerely, and are acquaint with his Inward Dealings, but will find it, who will sometimes be put to it to labour in the Fire, and work all night and day; Yet catch nothing, and ly in the dark and deep dungeons, in the place of Dragons: at another time, some that live near Him, have their Hearts so full of Faith and Love, as to be forced to cry out, *Hold LORD, I am but a Clay Vessel, I can hold no more.*

Secondly, Hence ye may see wherein solid Comfort and Encouragement in GOD doth consist, not in the light and transient flashes of Devotion, heats in Prayer or Praise, or Communicating, Rhetorical Flourishes in a Preacher; A Benign bodily temper, warmed by some awakened providence, will cause that. There is indeed an animal Religion, occasioned by an influx of the animal spirits, and sweetness of the Nerval Liquor; But this is not that encouragement in GOD, tho oft an excellent preparative for it. But it consists in a mind divested of sense and Earth, that expects from the Fountain the clear and Christal Streams: For the more there is of GOD, and the less of Earth in a comfort, the more it hath of delight, that is real: Whence it is, that Believers when outward things are abstracted, as here they were with *David*, are enlarged within *Psal.* 4. 7. *Habb.* 3. 17. 18. There is no fear of want of Comfort to these that have the GOD of Comfort. *Temiki Deo, quid deest*, When he is present, all things yield delight, when he is absent, they are but a burden, comforts

without him are crosses, Crosses with him are the sweetest comforts, for waters are clearest in the Fountain.

Thirdly, This informs, why the wicked have no comfort in their distress, they may have the dim Star-light of nature, or the variable Moon-light of sensible things, which have some light, but little heat, and Divine condescendance indulges them in these, for encouragement to duty, and Justice thereby adds to their reckoning; But when they retire unto GOD in trouble, they see nothing but dimness and distress, *Isa.8.22.* The very comfortable attributes of Love and Mercy look asquint on them. What is Mercy to a soul that slighteth it? What is Love to these that hate GOD and his wayes? What is Holiness, but a pure light to shew their spots? Yea, what is Heaven but a place where these that Love GOD, and are beloved of him, dwell? But what is all this to them, but the eying the Kings Palace, while they are in the Dungeon? What are to them the promises of the Word, but a sealed Fountain? Yea, their choicest comforts look terrible on them, their meat feeds them only for the slaughter; But when distress comes, see how the Poor thing shakes, as *Nero, Nec Amicum habeo nec inimicum.* Here bone companions and pot friends may divert their thoughts a while; But when that is gone, all is spent, still no encouragement in GOD. I proceed to grant some directions proper from this Doctrine.

*Direction 1.* Fear GOD's frowns most, let Him be both your Dread and Trust; They that fear Him need fear nothing else.

*1 Pet: 3. 13.* *What shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?* The fear of GOD casts out a slavish servile fear of distrust, the cowardly fear of sufferings, the anxious fear of troublesome doubts, the perplexing fear of our own weakness, but not a reverential fear of GOD, and obediential of Superiors, in relative duties, nor a due distrust of corrupt self, but these that in the due order, eye GOD most, and men least, have most solid comfort. *Psal: 42. 10.* *Reproaches are a sword*

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*in his Flesh, the presence of GOD. V: 11. A cordial at the heart, Why art thou cast down, O my Soul?*

*Direction 2. Eye GOD in straits, its by Him we must leap over theleWals, He it is that gives to His beloved sleep and rest: Mean shiffts, humane policy ; Yea, prudential methods may weather off a stroake and sinful trickes, or Arts may divert it, as Davids counterfeiting mad before Achish; But iolid encouragements is only from Him, that calms the Waves rage and peoples tumult. When the Sun appears the beasts of the Field betakes unto their dens, the Shaddows of the night are gone: so His Presence makes Humane fear dwindle unto nothing. In doubts indeed the Soul will be ready to say , Psal. 77. 3. *I remembred GOD and was troubled ; but when the cloud is over, then ye may hear other Language, Psalm 94: 19: In the multitude of my thoughts within me ( perplexed like the branches of a tre, as the Original bears ) thy comforts delight my Soul.**

*Direction 3. Secure an Interest in His Power, All-sufficiencie and Covenant; After troubles, that was comfortable to the Father of the Faithful, Gen: 15: 1: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward, a shield to shelter, a reward to cheer ; he had been under the power of the five Kings, chap: 14: they might return, for their swords, here was a shield : He had refusled to take of the prey, for that , GOD is, *valde magnum bonum*, or *nerces multa*, Psal: 84: 11: A Sun for Calefaction, Vivification, Direction and Spiritual Motion, a shield for Protection. But what signifies GODS Allsufficiency without an Interest , its that which secures the promise, Isa: 54: 10. Its a stable Covenant, but a Covenant still, and that includes duties as well as priviledges. Jehovah Zebaoth can shelter his friends, and shatter his enemies, but what is that to thee, if not thy GOD ?*

*Direction 4. Endeavour stedfast walking with GOD here, in outward and inward straites, see Davids courage, at another.*

ther time amidst splendid entertainments, see what droupings, *Psal: 51. 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation.* Yet in drouping fits, *Psal: 22. 1. The Soul can utter my GOD, tho he add, forsaken.* Heats in duty are valuable only as they promote Holy walking, but if they be used to supersede Christian walking, either in absolute or *relative duties*, its like the Husband man that expects all from the influences of Heaven, and puts his Hand in his Bosome. Let *Antinomians* talk as they will, Comfort, tho it be not the Reward of Merite, yet it is of Labour, assisted by free Grace. The Heart on GOD, and the Hand at Work, by a Circumspect walking, go on well. If GOD indeed withdraw, we droup, but if we withdraw, He tells by *Azariah, 2 Chron: 15. 2. If ye be with Him, He is with you, but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.* Holy Walking, may have Clouds, but they will drop down, and will have Comfort in the Work, more in the Reward.

For Conclusion, Let us be Strong in the LORD, and the Power of His Might; Let Distresses come and go, Comforts and Encouragements, draw or withdraw; Yet our GOD liv-eth, and blessed be our Hope. If the LORD be our GOD, there will not want Encouragement, If He shine we are Warm, if He withdraw, we Freeze. Let Earth and hell threaten, Men and devils rage, Distresses and Doubts arise; In the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting Strength. Did we but know GOD, all these would prove like the Waves dashing on a Marble Rock, that Washes, but does not batter it.

O LORD. let the World frown, if Thou Favour: Let it storm, if Thou Strengthen: Let the Ark of my Soul float on the rising waves of distress, if JESUS be within, He will rebuke the storm, and speake Peace, Joy, and Comfort, Amen.



# A POEM!

**T**HE Sky looks thick and boistrous Storms appear:  
 Smart Hailstones dart down through the Atmo Sphere.  
 Fightings without, and Fears within are nigh,  
 Frowns from all Quarters sadly I espy.  
 Soul, Body, Goods, Relations, drop away:  
 A Gourd ordain'd for Night, waits not the Day.  
 Are all these gone? Doth nothing yet remain,  
 A drouping Soul to cheer, in saddest Pain?  
 Cheer up my Soul, the Clouds begin to burst,  
 And scatter Fruiteful Showers to water Dust.  
 Look up, beyond the Azure Sky, and see  
 Love in the Looks of great Elshaddai's Eye.  
 Are Hosts combin'd? The GOD of Hosts hath Power,  
 Does Wants oppres? Here is the Richest Store.  
 Do Dustie Mortals frown? His Sovereign Arms  
 Can thee secure, from Force, Fear, Fraud, and Harms.  
 But what is this to me? If not my GOD?  
 This, this doth ease me of the heavy Load.  
 Come then, My GOD, commaud a Calm with me.  
 Smiles (more than Frowns) flow from that Beauteous Eye.  
 I'll get me up, beyond that Stormie Sky:  
 Eye, Feel, and Taste, yond Pleasures, Sweet as High.

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